

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L EC BRUSSELS 01658

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EEC, SP

SUBJECT: EC RELATIONS WITH SPAIN

1. DURING COURSE OF INITIAL CALL ON EC VICE PRESIDENT SOAMES, I ASKED FOR HIS ASSESSMENT OF THE EC'S FUTURE RELATIONSHIP WITH SPAIN, PARTICULARLY IN THE LIGHT OF DE AREILZA'S VISIT HERE FEBRUARY 17. SOAMES CONFIRMED THAT AREILZA HAD INFORMED THE COMMISSION THAT SPAIN NO LONGER WISHED TO PURSUE THE NEGOTIATIONS BROKEN OFF LAST FALL FOR A FREE TRADE AGREEMENT WITH THE EC. INSTEAD, SPAIN ONLY WANTS FOR THE MOMENT TO REOPEN DISCUSSIONS ON "REGULARIZING" THE 1970 SPAIN-EC AGREEMENT SO THAT IT LEGALLY COVERS THE COMMUNITY OF NINE UNDER THE SAME ARRANGMENTS AS HAD BEEN NEGOTIATED THEN WITH THE SIX. THEREAFTER, AT SOME POINT FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD, SPAIN WOULD APPLY FOR NEGOTIATIONS LEADING TO FULL MEMBERSHIP.

2. SOAMES SAID AREILZA RATIONALIZED THIS POSTURE ON THE GROUNDS THAT "THERE IS SOMETHING INFINITE ABOUT A FREE TRADE AREA," AND SPAIN DID NOT WANT TO LEAVE EVEN CURRENT IMPRESSION THAT THIS WAS HOW IT ENVISAGED ITS FUTURE RELATIONSHIP WITH EUROPE. AS TO TIMING, AREILZA TOLD SOAMES THAT CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM, LEGALIZATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND

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ELECTION OF A NEW CORTES WERE THE NEXT STEPS, AFTER WHICH

SPAIN WOULD SEEK TO OPEN CONVERSATIONS ABOUT MEMBERSHIP. SOAMES THEN ADVISED AREILZA THAT SPAIN SHOULD WAIT UNTIL IT WAS SURE THAT EUROPE WAS READY TO ACCEPT SPANISH APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP. CLEARLY, HE SAID, THE PACE AT WHICH INTERNAL REFORM SHOULD PROCEED WAS ENTIRELY UP TO SPAIN, BUT IT WILL ALSO TAKE TIME FOR EUROPE TO ADJUST TO A NEW SPAIN.

3. CONCERNING POLITICAL PARTIES, AREILZA SAID THAT THE SPANISH COMMUNIST PARTY WOULD REMAIN ILLEGAL. SOAMES TOLD AREILZA THAT HE CONSIDERED THIS A MISTAKE AND THAT CONTINUED PROSCRIPTION WOULD ONLY GIVE THOSE SO DISPOSED, BOTH IN AND OUTSIDE SPAIN, AN EXCUSE TO CLAIM THAT SPAIN WAS NOT SUFFICIENTLY DEMOCRATIC, AS WELL AS MAKE MARTYRS OUT OF THE COMMUNISTS. SOAMES ALSO SAID THAT HE FELT AREILZA AGREED WITH THIS LINE PERSONALLY BUT COULD NOT BRING THE ARMY THAT FAR.

4. SOAMES SAID HE WAS STRUCK BY AREILZA'S OVERT OPTIMISM THAT HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES COULD BRING ABOUT THE REFORMS WHICH WOULD BE NEEDED, AND WONDERED IF HE MAY NOT BE OVERLY CONFIDENT. I REMINDED SOAMES OF OUR STRONG INTEREST IN SEEING SPAIN MOVE INTO CLOSER ASSOCIATION WITH THE WEST AND EUROPE IN PARTICULAR AND SAID I HOPED EUROPE WOULD NOT SET IMPOSSIBLY HIGH STANDARDS. HE TOOK THE POINT, BUT COMMENTED THAT, WHILE GREECE ONLY HAD TO ADJUST AFTER 7 YEARS OF DICTATORSHIP, SPAIN HAD 40 YEARS OF ITS PAST TO LIVE DOWN. HINTON

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